

On page 5, please delete the paragraph beginning at line 31 and replace it with the following paragraph:

B2  
--"Fragments" of TACI encompass truncated amino acid sequences of the TACI protein that retain the biological ability to bind to TACI-L. An example of such a fragment is the extracellular domain. One embodiment of the extracellular domain has the amino acid sequence of amino acids 1-166 of SEQ ID NO:2. In another embodiment of the extracellular domain, the domain has the amino acid sequence of amino acids 1-166 of SEQ ID NO:2 with one or more conservative substitutions. Such fragments are identified in WO 98/39361, which is incorporated in this application in its entirety--

On page 6, please delete the paragraph beginning at line 27 and replace it with the following paragraph:

B3  
--The terms "TACI-L" and "TACI ligand" are used interchangeably to define the member of the TNF ligand family disclosed by WO 98/18921 and refer, among others, generally to a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:4 or an homologous analogs thereof. TACI-L is also disclosed as "TL5" in EP 0869180A1 and as "63954" in WO 98/27114. The full-length TACI-L comprises an extracellular domain, a transmembrane domain, and a cytoplasmic domain. Although the exact location of the extracellular, transmembrane, and cytoplasmic domains may differ slightly due to different analytical criteria for identifying the functional domains, the range of amino acids 1 to 46 generally represents the intracellular domain; amino acids 47 to 72 represent the transmembrane domain, and amino acids 73-285, the extracellular domain--

**In the Claims:**

Please delete claims 15, 21 and 26 and replace them with the following amended claims:

B4  
15. (amended) A method of screening a test compound to identify its ability to affect the interaction of TACI with TACI-L, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. forming a composition comprising (i) a TACI protein, wherein said TACI protein comprises a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:
  - (a) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2;
  - (b) fragments of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2; or
  - (c) a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid sequence that is at least 75% identical to SEQ ID NO:1; wherein said